

August 31, 1955

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Dear Bentley:

I have just received your letter of the 26th, which gave me some clue to your address. Perhaps I will see you at Lansing before you get this letter, but I am sending it on in hopes of sending a few days.

First, let me say how delighted I am to see some possible action on the Dictionary. The people I had talked to earlier had been the Saunders Co., when they had asked for advice on some genetic terms. I imagine the most practical procedure would be for the AIBS to affiliate with one company on the project, and their existing "American Medical Dictionary—Dorland" is as good a starting point as any. If I can be of any assistance myself please let me know, but I am glad to hear that such a project is already in your good hands. A Miss Jean Husted is in charge of the dictionary at Saunders.

You may by now have received another letter of mine, of the 16th, on another matter. This was written in great haste, and probably shows it. I'm back from that trip now, and having thought the matter over I would still like to present the letter to you, and ask your good offices for its publication. I hope I am acting properly in dealing directly with one editor (as I might not for an ordinary paper), but do so as it concerns an editorial. If you have not had my covering letter of August 16, I think the enclosure will still be self-explanatory. I have inserted two or three sentences at the beginning to make the topic less mysterious, since some weeks will have elapsed since the first publication. Let me repeat that I would not have responded in this fashion to the original paper, but the repetition of the claims in Science has lent them a settled character that I think is premature. Quite a few people have written me to ask what I think about it, and this letter seems the most efficient means of replying.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg

P.S. I know you have little to do with details of local arrangements, but scheduling the AIBS meeting to start the day after Labor Day was a sorry idea. It means travelling on Labor Day— at the risk of one's life and nerves if by car; and many planes just don't fly then. Madison may have been in a particularly awkward spot for it, but getting to Lansing on Monday is going to be quite a trial however we do it! We hope to see you anyhow, if we have any luck.